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ABSTRACT

The responsibilities and functioning of a college trustee committee on buildings and grounds (i.e., physical plant/campus development) are described. Specific tasks of the committee include: ensuring the adequacy and condition of capital assets; developing and keeping current physical planning policies for land, buildings, and equipment; providing new structures; rehabilitating or removing older structures as dictated by general board policies; and controlling plant debt and assuring adequate levels of funding for plant maintenance. After specifying the membership of the committee, it is recommended that the committee's meeting agenda cover: condition of plant, resource allocation, major repairs and renovations, capital construction, and real estate. Two sample agendas for board meetings are provided. The financial problems facing higher education and the resulting deferral in renewing capital assets are briefly addressed. The committee's responsibilities are discussed, including information that can be provided by four approaches: a facilities audit of condition and adequacy, physical planning policies, renewal or replacement, and funding of current plant operations and maintenance and capital improvements. Sever reference documents are identified. (SW)

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Buildings and Grounds Committee

Harvey H. Kaiser

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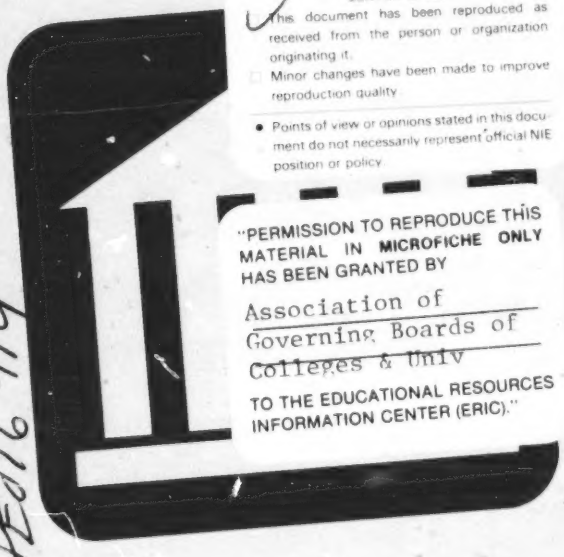

AGB Standing Committee Series

This publication is part of a new AGB series devoted to strengthening the role of key standing committees of boards of trustees and regents. Several assumptions underpin the series:

☐ The real work of the boards should be accomplished in committee. An effective committee system will enhance the productivity of full board meetings.

☐ The committee structure of any board should mirror the full range of its responsibilities as a legal, corporate entity. That is, the committee organization should cover the oversight roles trustees are expected to fulfill.

☐ Although there is no optimum committee system, certain principles and procedural matters should prevail: A clear and comprehensive statement of responsibility for each standing committee should appear in the board's bylaws or other operating policy. Each committee should be staffed by an appropriate administrative officer with a trustee or regent as chairperson. No trustee should serve on more than two active committees, preferably one—not including an executive committee membership. Crisp, well-conceived meeting agendas together with background information bearing on the agenda should be provided each member in advance of scheduled meetings. The committee's chairperson and staff should work together to ensure that adequate information is prepared to support the business at hand.

☐ Committees have the responsibility of *recommending* decisions and courses of action to the full board.

As committee members seek more and more useful information in their

areas of responsibility, it is important that a balance be struck between "too much" and "too little." It is incumbent on the committee, therefore, to be reasonable and judicious in requesting information that may be too detailed in order to avoid even the appearance of becoming embroiled in administration. Perhaps all such requests should require an affirmative response to the question: Does this request contribute to the committee's and the board's responsibilities for reviewing, setting, or approving institutional policies?

The AGB Standing Committee series will eventually include a separate publication for each of the following committees: buildings and grounds, academic affairs, student affairs, budget and finance, development, nominating, and executive. Other committees will be added to the series in due course. The authors of these publications strive to stimulate committee members' resolve that their collective work will reflect favorably on the board's performance as a whole. They share the conviction that committees should, together with their chief executive, set aside time to reflect on their responsibilities, staff requirements, meeting agendas, and follow-up.

AGB and the authors welcome comments and suggestions for improving this publication, and the others in the series, in future editions.

Buildings and Grounds Committee

Harvey H. Kaiser

Harvey H. Kaiser is vice president for facilities administration and associate professor of urban planning at Syracuse University. By education and experience he is an architect, urban planner, and social scientist. He has written and spoken extensively on the subject of facilities management in education and private industry and has been a consultant to government, colleges, and universities. He is a registered architect and holds an undergraduate degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and graduate degrees from Syracuse University.

Dr. Kaiser is also author of *Facilities Audit Workbook*.

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Committee Charge

A trustee committee on buildings and grounds, sometimes called a physical plant, campus development, or maintenance committee, is charged with the broad oversight responsibility for an institution's land, buildings, and equipment. Specific tasks of the committee include:

1. *Ensuring the adequacy and condition of capital assets.*
2. *Developing and keeping current physical planning policies for land, buildings, and equipment.*
3. *Providing new structures; rehabilitating or removing older structures as dictated by general board policies.*
4. *Controlling plant debt and assuring adequate levels of funding for plant maintenance.*

The fact that these responsibilities are managed primarily by the institution's administration does not proscribe an active role for the buildings and grounds committee. Rather, committee members must solicit the administration's full attention to the tasks outlined above. For the newer member of the committee, this may require a gradual approach, treading lightly on unfamiliar ground until an overall understanding of the institution's role and mission, financial position, and administrative process is achieved. Even the experienced committee member may need to look beyond the standard responses given at the quarterly board meetings about the condition of facilities, funding for maintenance, and proposals for new construction or renewal of existing facilities.

Structure

A suggestion for the makeup of the buildings and grounds committee is a chairperson and five members. The chairperson should be a senior member of the board of trustees with an expressed interest in the campus buildings and grounds, possibly a major donor with some training or experience in fine arts or building. One or two of the committee members should be involved in building as an architect, engineer, or contractor; another member with real estate experience would be valuable. At least one member should be on the executive committee; another on the finance committee; an alumni member is also recommended. Finally, the committee should always try to add a new board member and rotate him or her so that the new member becomes familiar with the campus and its concerns.

Ad hoc members of the committee should include the chief financial officer, assistant to the chief executive officer, and the head of facilities management (buildings and grounds).

Agenda

The buildings and grounds committee agenda for board meetings should be introduced by the chairperson and address five general areas of concern:

Condition of Plant: Report on the status of the facilities audit of the condition of buildings, grounds, and utilities.

Resource Allocation: Portion of overall operating budget devoted to the operation and maintenance of

plant, utilities, and major repairs and renovations.

Major Repairs and Renovations: Status of current projects and five-year projection of projects.

Capital Construction: Status of new construction, major additions, and proposed projects.

Real Estate: Transactions for acquisition, sale, or acceptance of gifts.

In addition to board members, the chief financial officer and director of facilities management should be present. For special reports on capital construction, architects and contractors may be invited to present designs or project status.

Suggested agendas for two board meetings are:

Meeting A

1. Chairperson's Remarks
2. Facilities Audit
   —Inventory Status
   —Physical Planning Status
3. Pro Forma Budget
   —Recommendations
4. Repairs and Renovation
   —Current Projects
   —Future Needs
5. Capital Construction
6. Real Estate

Meeting B

1. Chairperson's Remarks
2. Facilities Audit
   —Five-year Priority Projects
3. Budget Projections
4. Repairs and Renovation
   —Current Projects
   —Future Needs
5. Capital Construction
6. Real Estate

Responsibilities

The current capital crisis in higher education places new demands on the buildings and grounds committee. Background information on the causes and nature of this crisis is important for effective committee action.

Today's capital crisis in higher education dates from the 1950s and 1960s, those years when colleges and universities rapidly expanded to accommodate the baby-boom students. In each decade through the 1970s, the number of facilities constructed and the space added to campuses doubled to reach over 2.3 billion square feet in 1981. Buildings with a life expectancy of 40 to 50 years were constructed quickly and cheaply, without concern for such factors as energy conservation and accessibility for the handicapped. Older buildings received minimal attention and major repairs and renovations for the most part were deferred.

Higher education in general is in financial straits. In the best of times many institutions sacrifice maintenance and renewal or replacement of capital assets to the improvement of salaries and other expenses related to teaching, research, and community service. In any year, it is tempting for governing boards and administrators to postpone maintenance and for legislators to postpone funds for renewal or replacement of obsolete or wornout assets. In this period of financial constraint, a widespread contraction in funds for plant renewal and replacement is inevitable. This reduction is compounded by an unprecedented convergence of the

following factors: high inflation; soaring energy costs; the ever-changing demands of a rapidly advancing technology; proliferation of government regulations; tightening government appropriations; and difficulty in gaining access to financing.

As a result, renewal of capital assets has been deferred and the future has been mortgaged. Academic and dormitory buildings have not been renovated, scientific and computing equipment has not been purchased or replaced, library collections have not been expanded, and energy-related improvements have not been made. The magnitude of the unfunded deferred maintenance is suggested by a recent survey by the Association of Physical Plant Administrators (APPA). It was estimated that in the 1980–81 fiscal year, approximately $1.85 per gross square foot of space was required for outstanding major repairs and renovations.

For the 3,100 institutions of higher education with 2.3 billion gross square feet of space, this indicates a total deferred maintenance of $4.3 billion. While the issue of unfunded regular and deferred maintenance lacks glamour, it must now be of paramount concern to policy makers involved in higher education.

Increases in energy costs of four and five times in the post-OPEC decade have dramatically affected higher education. Sprawling collections of buildings designed and built without energy conservation in mind, and a casual attitude towards building operations and use of space, have made it necessary to divert resources from academic programs and institutional enhancement to pay fuel bills.

By now, all institutions have reduced energy consumption by com-

binations of "quick-fix" improvements, modest operating budget expenditures, and major capital outlays. Refining temperature controls, reinsulating buildings, and installing central energy management systems are steps being combined with reviews of space use at campuses across the country. Suggestions for energy conservation abound. They are readily available to campus administrators and their use should be encouraged as part of the board's role in monitoring energy management and energy costs. Unfortunately, reduced consumption due to conservation measures may not result in actual savings but serve only to offset increases in fuel costs.

For the member of the buildings and grounds committee, there are several specific concerns to address:

1. *How adequate and in what condition are the campus buildings and grounds?*
2. *Are the levels of resources allocated for maintaining and renewing capital assets appropriate for the need?*
3. *What response should be made to proposals for new construction and building renewal?*

These three concerns require that tough and sometimes unpleasant questions be addressed to campus administrators: How much space do we have and is it too much or too little to meet the institution's role and mission? How much of the annual operating budget is allocated to plant operation and maintenance and what does it represent in the levels of regular maintenance and deferred maintenance? Are funds available for new construction and is the space required or is renewal of existing facilities more appropriate?

To ask the necessary questions and assist in reaching the best conclusions, the members of the buildings and grounds committee need reviews of the areas of specific responsibility outlined on page 2. These reviews take the form of four tasks: a facilities audit of condition and adequacy; physical planning policies; renewal or replacement; and funding of current plant operations and maintenance and capital improvements. If the reviews are not available, the committee should ask the administration to initiate them.

Following is a brief description of each review and a discussion of how the review should be used.

Task #1: Adequacy and condition of existing facilities

A facilities audit is a useful tool to evaluate the functional and physical adequacy of campus facilities. An audit assists the institution's decision makers in the evaluation of future needs for maintaining the physical plant. A comprehensive audit serves several purposes:

1. *It provides a description of building components.*
2. *It contains an analysis of building conditions.*
3. *It offers an analysis of a building's functional adequacy.*
4. *It provides an overall rating of a building's condition and adequacy.*

Taken cumulatively, the facilities audit provides a benchmark for all campus facilities, including buildings, grounds, and utilities.

A resource for a comprehensive facilities audit is the *Facilities Audit Workbook*, published jointly by the Association of Governing Boards (AGB), the National Association of

College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), and APPA. The evaluation of building conditions is an objective process that includes an inventory of institutionally owned and leased buildings, grounds, and utilities. Depending upon institutional resources, surveys can be conducted by in-house staff, by consultants, or a combination of the two.

Evaluation of functional adequacy is a more subjective process, involving detailed measures of space utilization that can be compared to benchmarks available from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and other published criteria. Because the functional analysis examines a building's suitability of use for its present occupancy as well as for other programs, its location, and other provisions, it can be used to study assignable space and adaptability for present as well as future use. This part of the functional analysis is subject to personal opinion and campus politics and may be influenced by preferences of individual funding sources.

But the facilities audit is only a part of a comprehensive facilities management program. The audit provides a space inventory, a survey of physical and functional conditions, and opportunities to note maintenance needs. A comprehensive program includes a physical planning policy, an inventory and analysis of facility conditions and adequacy, projection of future requirements, and mandated regulatory programs. These four major areas include ten elements:

Physical Planning Policy

1. Goals and priorities
   —Land use
   —Enrollments
   —Facilities

Audit and Analysis

2. Facilities
   —Inventory
   —Conditions
3. Management
   —Practices and procedures
4. Space utilization

Facility Requirements

5. Capital programs
6. Deferred maintenance
7. Controlled maintenance

Regulatory Mandates

8. Energy conservation
9. Environmental quality, health, and safety
10. Accessibility for the handicapped

Task #2: Physical planning policy

A physical planning policy is a vital part of an institution's long-range plans for coping with the decades to the end of this century. It represents the translation of concerns such as academic diversity, access to higher education by different populations, and commitment to public service into policies for an institution's physical assets: land, buildings, and utilities. These policies are based on realistic assessments of enrollment projections and the analysis of conditions and utilization of facilities. This task is of the highest priority for senior administrators and governing boards and must be developed in a practical manner and a concise form.

The physical planning policy should cover three main elements: land, facilities, and alternative programs for implementation. Content should be based on accurate data, with rhetoric limited to brief policy statements. For example, institutions that have rapidly expanded land holdings should define geographical areas of interest. This leads to poli-

cies of delineating limits to campus land, with considerations of consolidating holdings within the area of interest, and selling or purchasing to create contiguous holdings. Divestment of surplus land and improvements has bailed out several major universities with an immediate source of cash; it should be given serious consideration for long-range needs.

Decisions concerning new construction, conservation of existing structures, and removal of obsolete facilities are based on policies established early in the planning process. The economics of each alternative are balanced against local attitudes, academic priorities, and enrollments. These decisions are developed from thorough analyses assessing alternatives set against carefully prepared long-range budgets. The allocation of resources for academic purposes and capital assets must be realistically viewed for five- and ten-year periods, with a conservative examination of revenue sources.

The final approval of an institution's goals and policies rests with its senior administrators and governing board. The review cycles should be a joint effort mandated by board action.

Task #3: Renewal or replacement

Decisions about new construction or renovation of existing facilities—whether to "renew or replace"—is a third area of review for the buildings and grounds committee. Public and private higher education have adopted a uniformly conservative stance concerning capital improvement recommendations. Apart from regions of rapid growth, little expansion of campuses is anticipated throughout the country. New facilities

will be justified when existing facilities have to be replaced or substantially improved due to obsolescence.

The dilemma of renewal or replacement of campus buildings comes at a time when significant growth in enrollments is not expected; when federal support for research and community service may be reduced; and when current levels of private and public funding for higher education measured in constant dollars may not be forthcoming. The academic enterprise is continually in flux, new programs are created to respond to social and technical change, and existing programs are consolidated or replaced. Concurrent with the need to accommodate academic change is the serious backlog of deferred maintenance on most campuses and the inevitable problems associated with continued building deterioration due to normal use, vandalism, and weather exposure.

In periods of projected financial constraints some decisions to "renew or replace" must be supported and some deferred for future funding. Those proposals to be given support by the board should qualify because of compelling needs including: hazardous conditions; modifications imposed by legislation; those needed to maintain accreditation; and cost-effective improvements to protect buildings. Proposals deferred as not vital for immediate attention entail a risk that building conditions may worsen and create greater future liabilities. The decision to defer should be reached only after determining priorities and selecting those projects requiring the earliest attention.

One element involved in the decision to "renew or replace" is the campus attitude regarding the reten-

tion and extension of the life of a structure. Other considerations will include the expenditure required for renovation, the ensuing loss of the space during construction, and costs for temporary use of space during construction. A decision should take into account all alternatives such as: What levels of renovation are possible? Can the work be phased to allow use during renovation or can an equivalent amount of funds be spent more wisely by rehabilitating other pace to accommodate program needs? And finally, can the proposed academic needs and other institutional needs be better accommodated with construction of a new building as a replacement to the existing one?

In some cases, trustees must weigh the importance of renewing an existing structure, even at premium costs. Is the historical architectural value worth premium costs? Governing boards and administrators may confidently put forward plans for building replacement, only to face a polarized campus community when plans are announced to demolish the older, and not necessarily historic, structure.

The past decades of major campus expansion favored new building projects over repair and renovation. Community, campus administrators, influential governing board members, and potential donors have leaned towards the new structures.

Facing the chief executive officer and governing board in reaching a decision on renewal or replacement are a host of considerations: Can support be attracted for a renewal rather than a replacement? Will the results of a building renewal be both functionally and esthetically successful? Can annual operating budgets

absorb added costs for operating and maintaining new construction?

Before completing planning for a project, the campus administration should attempt to take into consideration all the pros and cons of renewal and replacement. A major project of renewal—restoration, preservation, renovation, conversion, or remodeling—needs to consider the feasibility of alternatives with detailed cost estimates of renewal versus replacement.

Task #4: Financing

The appropriate levels of funding from current revenues for plant operations and maintenance and the appropriate level of debt service are the two major areas of concern for the buildings and grounds committee. Plant operation funding usually covers the cost of utilities, maintenance—preventive and regular—with some current plant funds used for repairs and renovation. The latter is treated in a variety of manners: funding work up to a limit, such as $100,000, from operating budgets, or using capital fund sources amortized over a period longer than one year. This treatment is a troublesome one, with the work not funded by plant funds gradually accruing as deferred maintenance and leading towards requirements for capital funding.

The key question on annual operating budget funding for maintenance is: How much is enough? As a reference, NCES reports for 1979–80 an average of 10 percent of total educational and general expenditures were devoted to plant operation and maintenance. A range for all levels of institutions of from 8 to 12 percent

has shown a major increase in the past decade for utility expenses with a decrease for maintenance.

Formulas for budgeting of maintenance and major repairs and renovation have evolved over the past two decades as public systems of higher education seek equity of funding among institutions. Accountability for state legislature purposes has also influenced the adoption of formulas for funding allocation. One of the formula techniques used as an alternative to percentages of annual operating budgets is based on the principle of life cycle replacement of buildings. In this approach the life span of building components are separately analyzed and then aggregated to determine the annual amount of funds necessary to "renew" a building.

The University of California has developed a formula that uses a replacement index of 1.1 percent of the replacement value of campus facilities; that is, annual funding for maintenance, repairs and renovation should be 1.1 percent of the total cost of replacing existing campus facilities. Shortfalls in this level of funding will create excessive backlogs in regular maintenance and develop deferred maintenance of a major nature. A caution in using these formulas: There is an assumption that deferred maintenance is at minimum levels before applying such a formula.

A second financing question is related to capital funding of new construction and major renovations: What is an appropriate amount of debt service in the operating budget? A measure used to answer this question is the ratio of debt service to revenues. This ratio measures the

flexibility of the institution to commit revenues to resources other than debt service. The higher the burden of debt service, the more difficulty the institution will have in finding sufficient revenue to allocate to other financial and nonfinancial needs. The failure to meet debt service is an admission of severe financial difficulty. Recent data prepared by NACUBO reports a downward trend in this ratio with the average ratio of debt service to revenue for four-year institutions at 0.005.

Decisions for financing new construction and major repairs often disregard the changes that have occurred since the major building phase of the past 20 years ended. During that period debt financing was not a major issue; outright grants and low-interest loans from federal and state governments and foundations were readily available.

In recent years, however, the situation has changed drastically. Facilities funding by the federal government dropped from $1.1 billion in 1967 to $144 million in 1978, an 87 percent reduction even without considering the eroding effect of inflation. In 1981, the College Housing Program administered by the U.S. Department of Education had funds for only 19 new housing projects and 21 energy conservation projects for all colleges and universities nationwide. A similar pattern of disinterest is evident with foundations. While ten years ago many were committed to funding "brick and mortar" projects, today only a few are willing to do so. Funds available are almost exclusively for new projects, and donors have little interest in renovation.

Institutions sorely need increased

access to financing, including debt financing. Only half of the states have public authorities through which institutions of higher education may issue tax-exempt bonds. Many states that do have such authorities require the debt to be collateralized by unrestricted endowment—a requirement many institutions cannot meet.

Conclusion

An effective buildings and grounds committee must operate in the broader context of institutional stewardship and the influences of external factors on higher education. Both public and private institutions are affected more than ever by the national economy, government financial support, demographics, and social attitudes.

The fiscal needs are great and the requirements clear: to maintain facilities to stem the tide of deferral, to modernize instruction and research technology, and to comply with the national interests in terms of energy efficiencies, accessibility for the handicapped, environmental quality, occupational safety, and social equity.

The agenda is so large that a single committee working alone cannot hope to complete it. Members of the buildings and grounds committee must look for help from institution administrators, federal, state, and local governments, and the foundations, corporations, and private citizens who support higher education.

Initial efforts should be directed at studying the various issues in detail. An inventory of campus needs should be conducted. Current plant operation, maintenance, and renewal policies should be reviewed. The impact

of federal and state regulations should be evaluated in terms of dollars required and dollars available. In addition, it is important to gather and analyze descriptions of innovations by other institutions in areas such as saving energy, upgrading computer facilities, raising money, maximizing use of space, charging and accounting for deferred maintenance, or pooling and sharing resources. Funding sources should be made aware of the severity of the problem, and new methods of financing should be developed. Moreover, some mechanism should be established to coordinate efforts on a national basis.

There are those who will argue that the institution cannot afford to make the necessary funds available for buildings and grounds needs; but the cost of not making the investment is incalculable. An effective buildings and grounds committee plays a crucial role in the long-term success of the institution.

Resources

Campus Planning and Construction, by Sam F. Brewster (Washington, D.C.: Association of Physical Plant Administrators, 1977). A general treatment of the subject with references to space planning and renovation.

The Economy of Energy Conservation in Educational Facilities, by Educational Facilities Laboratories (New York: EFL, 1978). A concise background and specific recommendations for energy conservation. A well-written introduction to the subject.

Facilities Audit Workbook, by Harvey H. Kaiser (Washington, D.C.: Association of Governing Boards, Association of Physical Plant Administrators, and National Association of College and University Business Officers, 1982). A self-evaluation process for inventorying the condition and adequacy of facilities.

Financial Self-Assessment: A Workbook for Colleges, by National Association of College and University Business Officers (Washington, D.C.: NACUBO, 1980). Indicators of the financial condition of an institution relative to its financial risks.

Formula Budgeting: An Approach to Facilities Funding, by David L. McLintock (Washington, D.C.: Association of Physical Plant Administrators, 1980). Comprehensive treatment of one method for budgeting operations and maintenance of physical plants.

Hang-Gliding or Looking for an Updraft, by Hans H. Jenny (Wooster, Ohio: College of Wooster and John Minter Associates, 1981). Subtitled "A Study of College and University Finance in the 1980's—The Capital Margin." Recommends financial measures to fund renewal and replacement of facilities and equipment.

Mortgaging the Future: The Cost of Deferring Maintenance, by Harvey H. Kaiser (Washington, D.C.: Association of Physical Plant Administrators, 1978). An overview of the effects of deferring maintenance of higher education facilities.

AGB Standing Committee Series

This is the first in a series of publications on the key standing committees of the board of trustees. These concise, pocket-size publications are designed to provide important information on committee issues and operations for every member of the board. Other titles planned are:

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